

## Quebec Song: Strategies in the Cultural Marketplace

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Thirty-five years after the simultaneous resurgence of Quebec nationalism and popular song during the Quiet Revolution, the soundscape in Quebec has changed substantially. The explicitly nationalist tendency of the earlier *boîte à chanson* era has not been continued by the generations of the Eighties and the Nineties. Stylistic influences are, if anything, more splintered and diverse than they were for Robert Charlebois on his return from California in 1967. The focused strategies for state support of the music industry have sustained a certain vitality within Quebec borders, but do not seem to have had an echo in terms of presence in external markets. To get a sense of the status of the Quebec music industry at the turn of the century, this paper will look at how Quebec recordings are perceived and presented by Quebec and international retailers, then analyze five recent recordings<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to isolate patterns of production, distribution and influence.

The advent of state interventionist policies in cultural domains in Quebec followed soon after the increase in state roles in education, health, finance and industry that defined the Quiet Revolution of the Sixties. The first rush of musical energy had needed no encouragement. The emergence of Quebec political nationalism and the Golden Age of Quebec song were chronologically simultaneous (from the late Fifties through the Quiet Revolution until the first *Non* referendum vote in 1980). During that period, Bruno Roy's assertion that "...*la chanson québécoise est une manifestation populaire de la conscience collective*" (9) did not appear to be hyperbole. The parameters

of subsequent musical evolution were present in the profiles of Leclerc, Vigneault and Charlebois who capped this period together at the *Superfrancofête* in 1974. Félix Leclerc was the authentic, with acoustic guitar, boots and flannel shirts on stage at the Olympia in Paris, seemingly just emerged from the woods, representing the origin myth, an unspoiled New World. Gilles Vigneault symbolized a confident, expressive nationalism, embodied in Brel-like recitatives replete with *québécois* landscapes and village narratives. Robert Charlebois was the assimilator, integrating California psychedelia and soul music, beginning the imaginative synthesis of North-American styles which would lead ultimately to Luc Plamondon's unseemly boast: "*On est comme dix ans en avance sur eux [les Français] pour l'américanisation du français*" ("Pour une chanson" no. 6). The yé-yé contribution of pop derived from Anglo-Saxon models, while irrelevant to the nationalist bent of the recordings issuing from the celebrated *boîtes à chanson*, augmented the presence of popular francophone music in Quebec. In the mid-Seventies the market share in Quebec for francophone music peaked at 25%. When that share slid back to 10% at the end of the decade, Quebec intervened to prop up the industry, beginning with the PADISQ program in 1983. In 1985 the federal program MusicAction began contributing additional subsidies. These subsidies were critical to the survival of Quebec song. Danielle Tremblay's affirmation is only slightly exaggerated: "*Aucun disque québécois majeur de la dernière décennie (bon vendeur ou non) n'aurait été produit sans ces programmes.*" It should be noted that the presence of a federal program of subsidies is symptomatic of the fact that elements of the Quebec problem are common to Canada as a whole, as a minority cultural space within North America.

Quotas for radio broadcast of francophone (and Canadian) music, were established at the federal level in 1973 by the *Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes* (CRTC), and, after varying throughout the crisis years of the Eighties, stand again at a required 65% of francophone radio programming with 55% between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM. Requirements for Canadian content are 30% for both anglophone and francophone stations (Houle 18).

The Eighties saw an additional strategy, this time emanating from the ministries of Cultural Affairs and of Industry and Commerce: “...*un plan de ‘rattrapage’ de l’industrie québécoise de la musique qui consistait à la rentabiliser et à l’adapter aux normes et au fonctionnement de l’industrie américaine*” (Alix 61).

In 1996, SODEC (*Société pour le développement des entreprises culturelles*—a government agency) began a new program intended to promote the export of Quebec cultural productions called SODEXPORT. Funding for export activities in the recording and concert industries progressed from \$333,000 in its first year to nearly \$500,00 in 2001. SODEC’s intentions were quite explicit: “*L’exportation et le rayonnement international sont des priorités pour le Québec. La SODEC, dans ses principes généraux 2001-2002, fait de l’accroissement des retombées sur les marchés hors Québec un axe fondamental de son intervention pour aider les entreprises exportatrices à réaliser leurs objectifs dans le contexte du rayonnement culturel du Québec*” (SODEC). Given the cost of promotional and tour support, however, it is clear that these sums could have benefited only a small minority of the eligible artists.

The effect of these interventions is not easily discernible where recordings are sold, if the Web presentation of catalogues is any indication of market realities. The site of Tower Records, a dominant American group, is instructive in this regard. There is, in fact, a *Québécois* section under the International category, which is generally divided by country and/ or genre ( ie Klezmer, Korean, Kurdish, Laotian, Latin). In this section can be found two recordings, one entitled *Fiddle and Accordion* (various artists), the other entitled *Cent Ans de Chansons Folkloriques* (various artists), either of which could be had via special order. Other potential francophone categories were equally non-productive: *Canada* turned up *La Bottine Souriante*, and other traditional musics only. *French* turned out not to be regional, but a by-language category listing everyone from Edith Piaf to *Fatal Mambo*. No listing anywhere for Gilles Vigneault or for Jean Leloup. Félix Leclerc could be had only by special order. *Beau Dommage* was included in none of the above sections, but a search nevertheless turned up three recordings. In his own analysis of Tower Records' retail practice, Timothy Taylor sees even the need for such categories (by region or language), when rock is listed alphabetically by artist, as evidence of "...the limitless ways capitalism constructs centers and margins, and how the margins, no matter how diverse, are nonetheless undifferentiated almost beyond recognition" (14).

Borders, a large Midwestern retailer of books and music, while employing an elaborate color-coded presentation scheme in their stores for the regions of World Music, has no color (i.e. category) for North America at all, thus assigning Quebec song the effective status of a non-music. Indeed, the only North American French-language recording to have registered significantly on the World Music charts appears to have been

*Beausoleil*, a Cajun revivalist group from Louisiana headed by Barry Ancelet. At Borders the World Music categories have superseded previous International categorizations, which might have found a place for Quebec productions in a French-language bin, like at Tower Records. As it is, there is no place to begin a search for Quebec productions in a Borders store. The Borders web presence is now hosted by Amazon, and offers an uneven selection ignoring major contemporary artists in favor of Céline Dion. The artists who are listed are often not in stock, requiring substantial waits or marked with “limited availability.” General searches are unproductive, with “Quebec” turning up multiple recordings of Ike Quebec, a black American jazz saxophonist active in the Forties, for example.

One would have expected that FNAC, the dominant French retailer of books and music, would do somewhat better than the American retail groups. However, the category *chanson québécoise* was buried two levels down on the FNAC web site, under *Variété française* and *La chanson française*. Many important Quebec groups and musicians could be found through searches (Leloup, *Beau Dommage*, Leclerc, Forestier, to cite but a few) but they had no useful categorization that could be readily identified. A search for *Beau Dommage*, for example, which turned up seven discs, could not be expanded using FNAC's search engine intended to turn up *résultats associés*. In the *Musique du monde* section, a Cajun record was highlighted, but no section for *québécois* or North American music existed otherwise. None of the artists selected for later discussion in this paper (i.e. Montreal best-sellers in August of 2000) were available on the FNAC site in October of the same year, indicating a less than attentive response to Quebec musical actuality by the French distributors and retailers.

Archambault, on the other hand, a major Montreal retailer of books and recorded music, favors *Chanson québécoise* over all other recorded musics in its Web presentation, breaking Quebec song evolution into decades beginning in the Sixties and offering a virtual history of the medium via annotated lists of the top ten recordings from each decade. Archambault's in-store holdings of *québécois* and other francophone musics rival that of any store in the world, including those in France.

The clear conclusion from this mini-survey is that Quebec song has not benefited in any significant fashion from the marketing strategies associated with World Music or other "international" categories, nor has the Quebec music industry managed to project an identity, even into the French and francophone markets. Penetration of Anglo-Saxon markets has not occurred—if one excludes Céline Dion—in spite of the adoption by the Quebec music industry of American production standards. This in itself is unsurprising, give that Spanish-language music is the only music to have achieved a noticeable market share in the U.S., for reasons of demography, rather than the nature of the productions. An argument could be made that Brazilian productions of the Seventies, from Antonio Carlos Jobim and Joao Gilberto to Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, represent an exception, but their early successes in the American market have proven difficult to sustain.

The lack of penetration in the French market is due to a variety of factors. The simplest to identify is the high cost of “breaking” an artist on foreign soil (i.e. attaining a market presence which becomes financially self-sustaining in that territory). These costs include transportation, technical tour support and promotional expense if touring artists are to have any impact, as well as promotion of recordings for radio play, and in-store sales promotion. Robert Pilon has a disparaging opinion of the sums dedicated to this

purpose: “Pour l’instant, l’aide gouvernementale à l’exportation de la chanson se limite à [...] quelques centaines de milliers de dollars. C’est complètement ridicule”(Brunet 100).

The limited size of the Quebec market does not allow for any but the brightest stars to accumulate the necessary war chests on their own.

An additional problem related to the size of the Quebec market has been the relatively conservative nature of Quebec productions in popular music. The latest trends have tended not to appear in Quebec, in favor of what is known as a *crossover* style, i.e. one which will appeal reliably to the middle of the market. According to Gilbert Ohayon of EMI France, “*Le produit québécois, s’il a du mal à marcher en France, c’est qu’il est trop populaire pour nous. Trop crossover pour nous. Il ne l’est pas trop au Canada parce que le crossover y est une condition d’existence.*” (Brunet 104) Most of the active artists from earlier generations would now fall into the “crossover” category, as would the more recent mainstream artists like Patrick Norman or Céline Dion. Ohayon makes the additional point, however, that Quebec markets are in general not receptive to French artists either, other than the blockbusters like Francis Cabrel. The most common pattern in both directions seems to be the *succès d’estime*, which makes artists known to a number of fans insufficient to support concert-making outside of the festival circuit, where subsidies from entities like Hydro-Québec make all things possible.

In spite of the modesty of external success, Quebec song is alive and well within Quebec's borders. The combination of the adoption of American production standards, production support and broadcast quotas appear to have allowed Quebec song to defend market share in its own territory, although at significant cost, as we will see in discussing specific examples. The market share for francophone music has again risen to the level of

25%, and many recent recordings seem to be more reflective of the diversity in popular music world-wide than of the mainstream tendencies lamented above.

In spite of the fact that Quebec song primarily exists in an internal cultural space and market, theoretical concepts relating to the globalization of popular musics have relevance to a critical analysis of Quebec song. Popular song is now disseminated and created in an international cultural space that most often draws its stylistic dimensions from the Anglo-Saxon models, but this space is increasingly dynamic. In Timothy Taylor's words, "...globalization is providing musicians all over the world with new ways of making hybrid sounds and hybrid selves. [...] The dynamics of collaboration, representation, and appropriation create new, complicated political and subject positions that shift with increasing frequency"(197). This globalization represents simultaneously an opportunity and an intimidating space of new and conflicting values. Danielle Tremblay, referring to the dilemma of the *québécois* artist, asks the rhetorical questions: "Comment s'y retrouver au milieu des nouveaux instruments électroniques et au milieu des images culturelles de toutes sortes, uniformisées par les médias anglo-saxons? Comment comprendre selon les spécificités de notre culture les nouveaux moyens de production et de diffusion d'une œuvre musicale: vidéo-clip et disque compact?" (in Giroux, 87-88).

The fluidity of the global music environment is partially due to the mid-Eighties breakdown of the dominance of Anglo-Saxon rock, which Mitchel calls the "master narrative", into "a series of fragmented, decentered musical forms which sometimes corresponded to or overlapped among particular youth cultures" (Mitchel 12). The major subversive element in this breakdown is rap, and subsequently hip hop, with its urban,

Caribbean and Afro-American cultural foundations and its stylistic basis in the spoken word and the borrowed (sampled) instrumental track. Could it be that hip-hop, now the dominant market category in Anglo-Saxon popular music, has become the new "master narrative"? The ramifications of such an assertion are too wide-ranging and contradictory to be discussed here.

In any case, much of Quebec song continues to represent a distinctive cultural space, but through musical means, and with ideological and metaphorical dimensions, which have radically changed. Mitchel's comment, that "... national 'vernacular expressive cultures' are constructed through music by means of a hybridization of local and global musical idioms" certainly appears to apply increasingly to contemporary Quebec popular song. Peter Manuel points out the importance of urbanization, which relativizes the contribution of local (mostly rural) folk traditions, in the development of new hybrids (Manuel 17). In the *québécois* context, it is Montreal and its changing cultural kaleidoscope and cosmopolitan lifestyles, which exemplify this trend. Given the dynamics of these processes, what can be the continuing role of government subsidies, originally intended to maintain a national (i.e. local to Quebec) cultural vitality?

A look at several recent *québécois* musical productions will serve to illustrate many of the trends mentioned above. Cultural analysis of song in a globalized environment requires a level of knowledge increasingly difficult to maintain, ranging from the tools associated with musicology to comparative cultural influences in both authentic and hybrid forms. A partial sampling of the elements which might come into play follows.

- style (rhythm, instrumentation, sampling, melodicity, vocals [sung vs. spoken or sounded]; elements of ethnic or regional origin)
- lyrics (language, prominence in track, importance, influences, aspects of prosody, cultural signs, narrative/ descriptive/ sentimental/ activist)
- production elements (live vs highly produced, use of studio musicians, guest musicians, sampling, synthetic elements [strings, drums, horns], overall quality, processing)
- manufacturing/distribution (cassette/CD/LP/MP3 and importance of length, quality and expense of final product, as well as profit for all participants; breadth of distribution network )
- marketing strategies (mass-marketing [radio/ TV/Internet] versus performance-based sales or other cultural alliances [associations with political/ social issues or movements or ethnic/ linguistic affiliations])

In that music is often (not always) performed in a public context (on stage) it is also possible to follow Robert Giroux's lead and include aspects of stage presentation in an analysis (Giroux, 20). I do not do that here, in that the recording itself is the artifact under study, and not an event involving direct contact with an audience. Indeed, it is becoming less evident that a link between recording and performance can be assumed at all, given the increasingly sophisticated technologies and techniques that are available to artists in the production of recordings. An analysis of five discs follows. It should be kept in mind that these disks are representative of developing trends in the cosmopolitan urban market of Montreal, and are not presented as representative of the general buying habits

of the record-buying public of Quebec as a whole. An analysis of the latter would necessarily include Western (country), for example, as well as jazz, other more traditional musics and Anglo-Saxon imports.

The self-titled disc by the group Colioptère is a combination of ska (Jamaican origins through mixed UK bands like the Specials and the English Beat, continuing in Anglo-Saxon pop today notably with the Boston-based Mighty Bosstones), rap (of African-American and Caribbean origins but with a highly developed French scene) and rock. The lyrics could be categorized as urban contemporary, with a focus on interpersonal relationships without other distinguishable cultural content. We find present here the Montreal “langscape”<sup>2</sup>, with free interspersions of French and English, albeit with the common tendency to use English in the refrains. An example, from “*Renards argentés*”: “*À la radio et puis dans les journaux tu es sujet de controverse/ La papegai de l’informateur c’est sûrement le prix à payer/ Quand on parade sa vie privée l’inévitable prix à payer/ Dans les cent pas de l’appartement on suit la trace de l’inquiétude/ Le téléphone n’arrête plus de sonner/ What’s wrong pick up the phone/ What’s wrong ...what’s wrong... what’s wrong/ [Refrain] Can I forgive all things that I know something something before you let me know / From the start till the end this is just the way I feel when the message is send [sic]*”

*Colioptère* lists ten members, without detailing individual musical contributions. The production involves heavy use of synthesizing and programming. The recording company is Musi-Art, a group active since 1981, with distribution by the *Groupe Archambault Musique*, which after a brief episode as a producer of music, has settled into a major role in retail and distribution. The disc benefited from a subsidy from

MusicAction (an agency supported through the federal “*Programme d’aide au développement de l’enregistrement sonore*”).

Mara Tremblay’s disc *Le chihuahua* is perhaps the most stylistically diverse of my selection, including Cajun two-step via Zachary Richard, folk, grunge, and raw rock (à la Alanis Morissette). There are even strings on several tracks, but they are all played by Tremblay herself. Her lyrical content could be qualified as quotidian anecdotal or popular intimist, small events (“*Le spaghetti de papa*”, “*J’aime ton bordel*”) recounted with idiosyncratic musical accents and occasional humor. Absent are the sentimental or epic approaches often favored by pop artists. The production has a spontaneous, live performance feel, in spite of obvious heavy overdubbing. Individual musicians are credited for specific contributions.

Tremblay is supported by well-established pillars of Quebec *chanson*: the recording group Audiogram (a consistent success since 1984 with established artists like Paul Piché and Michel Rivard), and distribution through Archambault, with MusicAction financing. While Audiogram products have tended to feature a small group of session musicians (and thus portray a certain stylistic sameness), Tremblay has benefited from an approach that is both careful and highly individualistic. From “*J’aime ton bordel*”:

*“J’aime ton bordel toutes tes bebelles/ Me font rêver me font chanter/ Ouvre tes ailes la vie t’appelle/ Pour te faire danser pour t’envoler// C’est tout l’temps la fête, jamais tu t’arrêtes/ Tu veux danser tu veut chanter/ Toutes les planètes dedans ta tête/ Me font rêver et m’envoler.”*

*Lili Fatale* is a three-person band whose self-titled disc generally harks back to British synthesizer bands like *Depeche Mode*, with a mix of rap, though this last more in

the francophone (*M.C. Solaar*) mode than African-American. The lyrical content is urban contemporary again, with multilingual and multicultural touches. In “*Les djinns*” (referring to the North African spirit presence) revenge is promised for unrequited love: “*J’ai caché des mauvais esprits dans tes tiroirs/ Ils te laveront la langue à chaque soir/ Ils cacheront tes clefs, tireront tes cheveux/ Ils t’empêcheront de faire tout ce que tu veux/ Et ce sera bien fait pour toi/ [refrain] He’s coming back to me, I know/ He’s coming back to me/ He’s no more*”.

The three musicians in *Lili Fatale* are all credited with playing multiple instruments, one of which is *programmation* in all cases. All drums are synthesized. Recording, manufacturing and distribution are in the hands of the largest entertainment multi-national in the world—Sony.

*Les Respectables* is a relatively conventional five-piece rock band, with studio musicians added on occasion for their disc *\$=BONHEUR*. The fact that they write and play effectively is indicative of the maturing of the Quebec rock culture, and is a marked contrast to the short list of studio musicians who tended to appear on recording after recording up until the Eighties. An encouraging sign is that this is their first disc primarily in French, after several in English. The band maintains a classic studio feel, with a minimum of overdubbing and processing. *Les Respectables* can play in a multitude of styles; this recording includes reggae, rock and cha-cha. The hit song “*Amalgame*” is an explicit (i.e. credited) rip-off of a Spanish top-40 style, with the Montreal landscape in evidence and a lyric referring to conventional urban angst: “[...] *Et puis, c’est sûrement pas ça la vie/ Le métro boulot dodo/ et les maîtresses aux grosses fesses/ C’est l’ennui [refrain] Oh mañana quizás / No seré no mas aquí.*”

Passeport is the small recording company for *Les Respectables*, and is justifiably proud to have seen the group nominated in just about every possible category at ADISQ<sup>3</sup> in the year 2000 (rock album, rock band, song, production, music video). This production is also partially subsidized through *MusicAction*.

Marc Déry, a veteran of the Montreal rock band *Zébulon*, worked primarily with musician/ programmer Alain Quirion to produce this 1999 self-titled disc. Music styles vary from rock to Latin to urban folk. The song “*Le monde est rendu peace*” represents, for me, a certain apotheosis among the current sampling of Quebec song, combining conventional rhyming and verse/chorus structure with Latin rhythms and sections of heavily processed sampled voices in spoken English. The cultural content is a portrait of contemporary Montreal, with a continuation of the social commentary implicit in the title:

*Finie la jalousie*  
*Finie la peur de se retrouver tout seul*  
*Fini l'orgueil fini les crises*  
*Pus besoin de la police*  
*Pis pus besoin de l'église*  
*Depuis que l'ego a lâché prise*  
*Le monde est rendu peace*  
*Le monde est rendu peace*

*Aujourd'hui j'ai vu*  
*Un rabbin d'Outremont*  
*Sur une terrasse prenant le pastis*  
*Avec un skinhead et un péquiste*  
*Tout est beau tout est possible*  
*Alléluia I believe*  
*Y a des images qui hypnotisent*  
*Le monde est rendu peace*  
*Hey, le monde est rendu peace*  
*Hey, le monde est rendu peace*  
*Hey qu'on se le dise*  
*Hey, le monde est rendu peace*

This track is heavily synthesized, like many others on the disc, while some are primarily acoustic guitar and voice. Déry is part of the Audiogram label, with distribution from *Select* and financing through *MusicAction*.

While this is a limited sampling, these five discs appear to share certain characteristics, which may serve as a commentary on the direction of Quebec song. First, the style and cultural content are of international origin, filtered through a high-tech musical approach derived from that originating in the Anglo-Saxon markets. Second, linguistic purity is substantially absent from most of the sampled discs. If these songs were billboards, they would be banned in Quebec, according to the 101 Law. This is nothing more than a reflection of real language use in the city of Montreal, and feels completely natural to most Montreal music fans, I am sure.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, the only disc in this sampling whose production was not subsidized by the federal government is that of *Lili Fatale*, issued by the global multinational Sony. The diversity and independence of recording enterprises in Quebec is clearly difficult to maintain. This is of course not a condition unique to Quebec, but critics of the effect of ongoing subsidies can be as extreme as Denis L'Espérance, a former program officer in media arts for the *Conseil des arts du Canada*, who entitled a letter to *Le Devoir* in May of 2001: "*Les artistes sont tombés dans un régime étatisé de mendicité.*"<sup>5</sup> While L'Espérance is not referring to music specifically, his critique is a general one of subsidized cultural activities. Gibert Ohayon echoes these sentiments (as would most others in the private sector who compete against subsidized products): "*Je trouve que la façon dont le marché du disque est organisé au Québec fait penser à une famille où tout le monde s'est mis d'accord pour bien garder le gâteau et interdire l'entrée à tout partenaire. Par voie de conséquence, le*

*marché est en train de se scléroser, sinon de s'autodétruire. C'est décevant. Il y a des subventions et des aides, et ça joue contre eux... C'est trop facile pour ceux qui sont en place."* (Brunet 104)

The strategies adopted by the Quebec music industry and its ministerial supporters in order to survive in the cultural marketplace have relativized the importance of Quebec song as representative of a quest for a national identity. "National identity" is of course also a moving target, with the current definition unlikely to correspond to that assumed during the period of the Quiet Revolution. Paul Gilroy proposes a definition that may be applicable here: "There is a sense in which the new varieties of nationalism no longer attempt to be a coherent political ideology. They appear more usually as a set of therapies: tactics in the never ending struggle for psychological and cultural survival."(cited in Mitchel 25)

There is little doubt that the market identity of Quebec in popular music is undefined outside the borders of the province. With the sole possible exception of France (and this would quite probably even be a stretch for most younger French people), Quebec song is not seen as exemplifying a national movement of sufficient uniqueness to market it independently of other francophone song, if at all. This is unlikely to change, given the current globalized climate of popular music. The recordings analyzed above, however, do tend to indicate that some major productions of the Quebec music industry are escaping from the *crossover* category and may be able to compete, on an individual basis, for space in the francophone youth market.

The promotion of a high-technology cultural production that is limited in sales potential to the seven million *Québécois* (before that number is broken down into its

ethnic, language, age and income components) must be seen as a strategy to establish a cultural space and to furnish it with believable artifacts, whatever the cost. As Quebec song becomes increasingly penetrated with global stylistic and linguistic tendencies, it may become difficult to distinguish local and global productions and thus to justify the social investment<sup>6</sup> which has allowed Quebec song to do battle for market share on its home terrain. It is a defining paradox that the strategies for survival in the cultural marketplace will tend to sabotage the effort to build and maintain a distinctive cultural identity in Quebec. Industrial success—in terms of units sold or net income—may ultimately be the only measure that matters.

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<sup>1</sup> The recordings were selected in the summer of 2000 from the Quebec recordings identified and showcased as best-sellers at Archambault on rue Ste-Catharine Ouest in Montreal. Archambault is the major distributor of francophone popular music in Quebec.

<sup>2</sup> I first encountered the term “langscape” during a presentation by the poet Mary di Michele during sessions of the Quebec Summer Seminar (sponsored by the Center for Study of Canada at SUNY-Plattsburgh) in Montreal in August of 2000.

<sup>3</sup> ADISQ stands for “Association québécoise de l’industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la video.” It is a lobbying group for the entertainment industry and hosts an annual awards show at year’s end which is the Quebec equivalent to the American Grammy and Emmy events.

<sup>4</sup> The examples discussed in this article are by no means the most extreme. The Mexican-American woman Lhasa had a best-selling CD for Audiogram which was entirely in Spanish. Another popular CD last year was *Sources* by the Brazilian singer Bïa, which includes songs in French, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and English.

<sup>5</sup> The essence of L’Espérences argument is contained in this paragraph: “Le véritable scandale dans le système de subvention est ce phénomène vérifiable de chouchous, sauf que le scandale se situe non pas autour d’artistes talentueux, comme plusieurs cites par Marcel Deschênes, mais autour d’artistes aguerris au “lobby systématique” des gens sans (grand) talent, qui s’affichent comme artistes et qui cultivent le copinage avec les agents de programmes culturels qui ignorant à leur tour leur situation de conflit d’intérêts dans leurs rapports avec ces lobbyistes professionnels.”

<sup>6</sup> The expression “social investment” is here intended in both its literal and figurative senses. The literal sense includes 3.2 million dollars in subsidies from MusicAction invested in francophone music Canada-wide in 2000, and an additional 9.5 million allocated by the provincial Quebec government to support and promote Quebec song. (See MusicAction and ADISQ websites for additional details).

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Web sites

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HYPERLINK "<http://www.adisq.com/>" }
- Archambault (Quebec) on-line catalogue. [http://](http://www.archambault.ca) { HYPERLINK  
<http://www.archambault.ca> }
- Borders/Amazon. <http://www.borders.com> or <http://www.amazon.com>
- FNAC (France) on-line catalogue. [http://](http://www.fnac.fr){ HYPERLINK <http://www.fnac.fr> }
- MusicAction. { HYPERLINK "<http://www.musicaction.ca/>" }
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